

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
The Director of Intelligence and Research

SECRET

January 24, 1963

To : The Secretary
From : INR - Roger Hilsman
Subject : Commentary on the Tad Szulc Article

The Szulc article on Cuba which appeared in yesterday's (January 23) New York Times, contains the following inaccuracies on military developments in Cuba:

(a) We have no evidence that there have been "large shipments of weapons" arriving in Cuba. We believe that the Simferopol is the only ship to have delivered arms to Cuba since October.

(b) "Soviet encampments are being relocated and strengthened" is correct only in the limited sense that some SAM sites have been moved and barracks and entrenchments have been built at some of the armored group camps.

(c) We have no reason to believe that "underground hangars and runways" are being built. Airfield improvement, however, including construction of aircraft revetments has been noted; underground storage facilities are probably

DECLASSIFIED

SECRET

Atomic State etc. 1/25/63

being built.

(d) It is misleading to speak of construction being concentrated in "the main defense complex between Havana and the San Antonio de Los Baños air base in Camaguey province and in the Sierra Maestra area" since construction work on major military installations is to be found throughout the Island.

(e) The "pattern of Soviet military activity in Cuba" since November has unquestionably "bolstered" Cuban defenses to the extent that it has involved a broad program of training in weapons use. This training, however, has not extended to "highly sophisticated weaponry," like MIG-21's and SAM's.

(f) Szulc's figures for Soviet personnel in Cuba (12,000 men) fall considerably below the 16 to 17,000 figure that we now estimate to be there.

(g) The Cuban air force has 102 MIG's, not 150 as claimed by Szulc. Our current order of battle is 42 MIG-21's and 60 MIG-15's, 17's and 19's.

(h) Szulc contends: "It is known that Cubans are being trained to operate" missile installations. We have no evidence that Cubans are being trained to operate SAM

~~SECRET~~

- 3 -

installations, although we cannot exclude the possibility that this may ultimately happen.

(1) We believe that there is a large headquarters at the Torrens reformatory near Havana. There may be other headquarters units elsewhere in the Havana area.

(j) While there may be some Soviet construction now going on in the general areas named by Saule, there is no reason to believe that the Soviets have put "underground missile installations" (operationally emplaced) in any of these areas or, indeed, in any other part of Cuba.

~~SECRET~~